

Ashley G. Stollar, Communications/Outreach Specialist

The Historic Courthouse in Clayton County was filled to capacity as Chief Judge John Carbo welcomed guests to a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the State Court of Clayton County. Judges of the county's State Court, Superior Court, Probate Court, local lawyers, appellate judges, staffers, and guests were on to hear Chief Judge Carbo, Justice Harold Melton, Supreme Court of Georgia, and Clayton County Commissioner Jeff Turner on May 29.

The first judge, Judge Allen Foster, of the State Court of Clayton County was appointed in 1965, serving a part-time position that earned \$12,500 a year. Judge Foster was joined in 1978 by a second judge, Judge Emmett Arnold. In 1983, Judge Carbo joined the court as its third judge. The court moved from the historic courthouse to the Harold R. Banke Justice Center in 2000. Fifty years after its creation, the State Court of Clayton County has five judges.

Senior Judge Harold Benefield, who retired in 2012, said of the court he served on, "It is right that Clayton County should celebrate the half century of this institution. It is something of which Clayton County should be proud. It is simply an excellent court."



Commissioner Turner (left) presented Judge Carbo with a proclamation in honor of the anniversary of the court's inception.

Justice Harold Melton, Supreme Court of Georgia, spoke to the crowd about the importance of the State Court. "The State court," he said, "provides one of many means available to the community to resolve their disputes." There are plenty of ways for people to resolve disputes including violence, self help – taking back what one think is theirs. Then there is the legal process. "It is important that people view the role of the State Court as source of real relief."

The State Court of Clayton County recently began accepting cases through E-Filing. See related story [here](#) .